Reclamation's general exceptions from the categorical exclusion include title transfer action that incorporates problems or activities which will require the preparation of an environmental assessment. Single-purpose facilities within projects which would be ineligible for the categorical exclusion are those involving the following:

1. Unresolved issues involving the future operation and maintenance of the transferred facilities and lands. Potential transferees must be able to demonstrate the technical capability to maintain and operate the facilities and lands on a permanent basis and an ability to meet financial obligations associated with the transferred assets. Operations and maintenance of the facilities must not change in the foreseeable future.

2. Unresolved issues involving future use of lands or water associated with the transferred facilities and lands. Potential transferees must agree not to change the use of the lands or water associated with the transferred facilities for the foreseeable future.

3. Unresolved issues involving protection of interstate compacts and agreements. All transfers must be willing to assume responsibilities for commitments made under existing interstate compacts and agreements.

4. Unresolved issues involving meeting the Secretary's Native American trust responsibilities. All transfers must ensure the United States' Native American trust responsibilities are satisfied. In addition, outstanding Native American claims that are directly pending before the Department and that would be directly affected by the proposed transfer will be resolved prior to transfer.

5. Unresolved issues involving fulfilling treaty and international agreement obligations.

6. Unresolved issues involving protection of the public aspects of the project or facilities. Potentially affected State, local, and Tribal Governments, appropriate Federal agencies, and the public will be notified of the initiation of discussions to transfer title and will have (1) the opportunity to voice their views and suggest options for remedying any problems, and (2) full access to relevant information, including proposals, analyses, and reports related to the proposed transfer. The title transfer process will be carried out in an open and public manner. Once Reclamation has negotiated an agreement with a transferee, Reclamation will seek legislation specifically authorizing the negotiated terms of the transfer of each facility.

To be considered, any comments on this proposed addition to the list of categorical exclusions in the Departmental Manual must be received by August 1, 1996, at the location listed under **ADDRESSES** above. Comments received after that date will be considered only to the extent practicable.

Outline: Chapter 6 (516 DM 6) Managing the NEPA Process, Appendix 9—Bureau of Reclamation, 9.4 Categorical Exclusions.

Dated: June 25, 1996.

Kenneth D. Naser,

Acting Director, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance.

516 DM 6, Appendix 9—Bureau of Reclamation, 9.4 Categorical Exclusions

* * * * *

A. * * *

4. Transfer of title to single-purpose facilities within Reclamation projects to entities who are currently operating and maintaining the facilities or managing the lands, and who would agree to make no significant changes in operation and maintenance, and/or land and water use within the foreseeable future.

[FR Doc. 96–16654 Filed 7–1–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–94–M

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of a Draft Recovery Plan for the Kootenai River Population of White Sturgeon in Idaho and Montana for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability for public review of a draft recovery plan for the Kootenai River population of white sturgeon. The Kootenai River white sturgeon represents a land-locked population found in the Kootenai River from Kootenai Falls, Montana, downstream through Kootenay Lake to Corra Linn Dam on the lower West Arm of Kootenay Lake, British Columbia. The Service solicits review and comment from the public on this draft plan.

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan must be received on or before September 30, 1996, to receive consideration by the Service.

ADDRESSES: The draft recovery plan is available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours at either the Service's Upper Columbia River Basin Office, 11103 East Montgomery Drive, Suite #2, Spokane, Washington, 99206 or the Snake River Basin Office, 4696 Overland Road, Room 576, Boise, Idaho, 83705. Persons wishing to review the draft recovery plan may obtain a copy by contacting the Supervisor, Snake River Basin Office, at the above address or by calling (208) 334–1931. Written comments and materials regarding the plan should be sent to the Service's, Snake River Basin Office, attention Recovery Team Leader, at the above Boise address. Comments and materials received are available on request for public inspection by appointment at the Snake River Basin Office.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Ruesink or Steve Duke, at the Service's, Snake River Basin Office, 4696 Overland Road, Room 576, Boise, Idaho 83705. (208) 334–1931.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring an endangered or threatened animal or plant to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for the recovery levels for downlisting and delisting species, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. The Service and other Federal agencies will also take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

The Kootenai River white sturgeon became isolated from other white sturgeon in the Columbia River basin during the last glacial age (approximately 10,000 years ago). Since then, the population has adapted to the pre-development habitat conditions in the Kootenai River drainage. Historically, spring runoff peaked during the first half of June in the Kootenai River upstream of the existing Libby Dam in Montana. Runoff from

lower elevations between Libby Dam and Bonners Ferry, Idaho, was somewhat earlier, peaking in late May. Combined flows were often in excess of 1700 cubic meters per second (m^3/s) [60,000 cubic feet per second (cfs)]. During the remainder of the year, river flows declined to basal conditions of 113 to 226 m^3/s (4,000 to 8,000 cfs). Annual flushing events re-sorted river sediments providing a clean cobble substrate conducive to insect production and sturgeon egg incubation. Side channels and low-lying deltaic marsh lands were unimpounded at this time, providing productive, low velocity backwater areas. Nutrient delivery in the system was unimpeded by dams and occurred primarily during spring runoff. Floodplain ecosystems like the Kootenai River are characterized by seasonal floods that promote the exchange of nutrients and organisms among a mosaic of habitats and thus enhance biological productivity.

Modification of the Kootenai River white sturgeon's habitat by human activities has changed the natural hydrograph of the Kootenai River, altering white sturgeon spawning, egg incubation, nursery, and rearing habitats, and reducing overall biological productivity. These factors have contributed to a general lack of recruitment in the white sturgeon population over the past 22 years.

Recovery of the Kootenai River white sturgeon is contingent upon re-establishing natural recruitment, minimizing additional loss of genetic variability to the population, and successfully mitigating biological and physical habitat changes caused by the construction and operation of Libby Dam. This draft recovery plan proposes conservation actions to benefit white sturgeon within the entire Kootenai River watershed in Canada and the United States. However, recovery tasks proposed for the Canadian portion of the white sturgeon's range are only recommendations since the Act does not impose any restrictions or commitments on Canada. The draft recovery plan also proposes a strategy for improving coordination and cooperation between the United States and Canada on the operation of Libby Dam with the operation of other hydroelectric facilities within the Kootenai River basin and elsewhere in Canada.

The draft plan was developed by a recovery team composed of representatives of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans, British Columbia Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, and the Service. Short-term recovery objectives proposed are: a) prevent extinction and b) begin to re-establish successful natural recruitment to the Kootenai River population of white sturgeon. Proposed recovery actions include providing additional Kootenai River flows necessary for natural recruitment and using aquaculture, i.e. hatchery propagation, to prevent extinction. The long-term objectives are to provide suitable habitat conditions to ensure a self-sustaining Kootenai River population of white sturgeon. Specific delisting criteria are not determinable or proposed at this time.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of the plan.

Authority: The authority for this action is Section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: June 25, 1996.

Thomas Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, OR.

[FR Doc. 96–16806 Filed 7–1–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

Bureau of Land Management

[CO–017–1610–00]

Availability of White River Resource Area's Proposed Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (40 CFR 1505.2), the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), has prepared a Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) for the White River Resource Area. The PRMP/FEIS describes and analyzes the proposed management for 1,455,900 acres of public land and 365,000 acres of federal mineral estate in portions of Rio Blanco, Moffat and Garfield Counties in western Colorado.

Decisions generated as a result of this planning process will supersede and/or incorporate decisions of earlier land use plans, including the 1975 White River Management Framework Plan, the 1981 White River Resource Area Coal Amendment to the White River Management Framework Plan, the 1981 White River Resource Area Grazing Management Environmental Impact Statement, and the 1987 White River Resource Area Piceance Basin Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

DATES: Protests of the proposed plan must be received by August 5, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Written protests on the PRMP/FEIS should be addressed to: Director (480), Bureau of Land Management, Resource Planning Team, 1849 ''C'' Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240.

Copies of the PRMP/FEIS will be available for review at the following locations: (1) Bureau of Land Management, White River Resource Area Office, 73544 Highway 64, Meeker, Colorado 81641; (2) Bureau of Land Management, Craig District Office, 455 Emerson Street, Craig, Colorado 81625; and (3) Bureau of Land Management, Colorado State Office, 2850 Youngfield Street, Denver, Colorado 80215.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bill Hill, RMP Team Leader, White River Resource Area Office, Meeker, Colorado 81641, (970) 878–4160.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The PRMP/FEIS addresses issues identified through public scoping and internal Bureau of Land Management review, including: (1) Salinity in the Colorado River; (2) mineral development throughout the resource area; (3) the spread of noxious and problem weeds; (4) reintroduction of the black-footed ferret; (5) unrestricted motorized travel throughout the resource area; and (6) habitat competition among wild horses, livestock and big game. Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS that was published in October 1994. The Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement combines ecosystem concepts, public comments, and components from the four alternatives described in the Draft.

Some of the major decisions developed in the proposed management plan deal with: (1) Making mineral resources available for exploration, leasing and development, in compliance with environmental laws, regulations and policies; (2) protecting sensitive resources by designating certain areas as closed or limited to off highway vehicle use until a subsequent travel management plan can be developed; (3) releasing the river and stream segments inventoried for Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Management from further WSR consideration; (4) managing wild horse